13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 137–57.